

CLAIMS

- 1 1. A computer system comprising:
 - 2 at least one processor;
 - 3 a memory coupled to the at least one processor;
 - 4 a performance data collection mechanism residing in the memory and executed by
 - 5 the at least one processor, the performance data collection mechanism collecting
 - 6 performance data for the computer system;
 - 7 a performance data transmission mechanism residing in the memory and executed
 - 8 by the at least one processor, the performance data transmission mechanism, when
 - 9 enabled, transmitting at least a portion of the performance data to another computer
 - 10 system coupled to the computer system via a network; and
 - 11 a performance data access mechanism residing in the memory and executed by the
 - 12 at least one processor, the performance data access mechanism allowing access to the
 - 13 performance data by a user of the computer system only if the performance data
 - 14 transmission mechanism is enabled.
- 1 2. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the computer system comprises a customer
- 2 computer system and the another computer system comprises a vendor computer system.
- 1 3. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the performance data comprises data
- 2 collected by an operating system residing in the memory and executed by the at least one
- 3 processor.

1 4. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the performance data collection mechanism,
2 the performance data transmission mechanism, and the performance data access
3 mechanism are all controlled by an operating system residing in the memory and executed
4 by the at least one processor.

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- 1 5. A networked computer system comprising:
2 (A) a first computer system;
3 (B) a second computer system coupled to the first computer system via a network,
4 the second computer system comprising:
5 (B1) a performance data collection mechanism that collects performance
6 data for the second computer system;
7 (B2) a performance data transmission mechanism that, when enabled,
8 transmits at least a portion of the performance data to the first computer system;
9 and
10 (B3) a performance data access mechanism that allows access to the
11 performance data by a user of the second computer system only if the performance
12 data transmission mechanism is enabled.
- 1 6. The networked computer system of claim 5 wherein the first computer system
2 comprises a vendor computer system and the second computer system comprises a
3 customer computer system.
- 1 7. The networked computer system of claim 5 wherein the performance data comprises
2 data collected by an operating system.

- 1 8. A method for a user of a second computer system coupled via a network to a first
- 2 computer system to access performance data collected by the second computer system,
- 3 the method comprising the steps of:
- 4 (A) the second computer system collecting the performance data;
- 5 (B) the second computer system determining whether transmission of the
- 6 performance data from the second computer system to the first computer system is
- 7 enabled;
- 8 (C) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer system to
- 9 the first computer system is enabled, allowing the user to access the performance data;
- 10 and
- 11 (D) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer system to
- 12 the first computer system is not enabled, not allowing the user to access the performance
- 13 data.

1 9. A method for a first computer system to collect performance data from a second
2 computer system coupled via a network to the first computer system, the method
3 comprising the steps of:

- 4 (A) the second computer system collecting the performance data;
- 5 (B) the second computer system determining whether transmission of the
6 performance data from the second computer system to the first computer system is
7 enabled;
- 8 (C) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer system to
9 the first computer system is enabled, allowing access to the performance data by a user of
10 the second computer system;
- 11 (D) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer system to
12 the first computer system is not enabled, not allowing access to the performance data by a
13 user of the second computer system; and
- 14 (E) the second computer system transmitting at least a portion of the performance
15 data to the first computer system.

1 10. A method for a user of a second computer system coupled via a network to a first
2 computer system to access performance data collected by the second computer system,
3 the method comprising the steps of:
4 (A) the second computer system collecting the performance data;
5 (B) the second computer system allowing the user to access a limited portion of
6 the performance data;
7 (C) if the user requests to access more than the limited portion of the performance
8 data:
9 (C1) the second computer system determining whether transmission of the
10 performance data from the second computer system to the first computer system is
11 enabled;
12 (C2) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer
13 system to the first computer system is enabled, allowing the user to access the
14 requested performance data; and
15 (C3) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer
16 system to the first computer system is not enabled, not allowing the user to access
17 the requested performance data.

- 1 11. A method for a first computer system to collect performance data from a second
- 2 computer system coupled via a network to the first computer system, the method
- 3 comprising the steps of:
- 4 (A) the second computer system collecting the performance data;
- 5 (B) the second computer system allowing the user to access a limited portion of
- 6 the performance data;
- 7 (C) if the user requests to access more than the limited portion of the performance
- 8 data:
- 9 (C1) the second computer system determining whether transmission of the
- 10 performance data from the second computer system to the first computer system is
- 11 enabled;
- 12 (C2) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer
- 13 system to the first computer system is enabled, allowing access to the requested
- 14 performance data by a user of the second computer system;
- 15 (C3) if transmission of the performance data from the second computer
- 16 system to the first computer system is not enabled, not allowing access to the
- 17 requested performance data by a user of the second computer system; and
- 18 (C4) the second computer system transmitting at least a portion of the
- 19 performance data to the first computer system.

1 12. A method for doing business comprising the steps of:
 2 (A) offering to a customer the ability to access performance data gathered by a
 3 customer computer system in exchange for the customer's sharing of the performance
 4 data;
 5 (B) if the customer does not accept the offer in (A), disabling customer access to
 6 the performance data on the customer computer system;
 7 (C) if the customer accepts the offer in (A), enabling customer access to the
 8 performance data on the customer computer system.

1 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of:
 2 (D) the customer computer system sharing the performance data.

1 14. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of:
 2 selling the customer computer system to the customer.

- 1 15. A program product comprising:
2 (A) a performance data collection mechanism that collects performance data for a
3 first computer system;
4 (B) a performance data transmission mechanism that, when enabled, transmits at
5 least a portion of the performance data to a second computer system;
6 (C) a performance data access mechanism that allows access to the performance
7 data only if the performance data transmission mechanism is enabled; and
8 (D) computer-readable signal bearing media bearing (A), (B) and (C).
- 1 16. The program product of claim 15 wherein the signal bearing media comprises
2 recordable media.
- 1 17. The program product of claim 15 wherein the signal bearing media comprises
2 transmission media.
- 1 18. The program product of claim 15 wherein the performance data comprises data
2 collected by an operating system.

- 1 19. A program product comprising:
2 (A) an operating system comprising:
3 (A1) a performance data collection mechanism that collects performance
4 data for a first computer system;
5 (A2) a performance data transmission mechanism that, when enabled,
6 transmits at least a portion of the performance data to a second computer system;
7 (A3) a performance data access mechanism that allows access to the
8 performance data only if the performance data transmission mechanism is
9 enabled; and
10 (B) computer-readable signal bearing media bearing the operating system.

- 1 20. The program product of claim 19 wherein the signal bearing media comprises
2 recordable media.

- 1 21. The program product of claim 19 wherein the signal bearing media comprises
2 transmission media.

- 1 22. The program product of claim 19 wherein the performance data comprises data
2 collected by an operating system.
